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On page 7, please replace the paragraph starting on line 7 and ending on line 11 with the following paragraph:

B2 While in a preferred embodiment of the invention light guide 230 shown in FIG. 2 is formed from a light fiber (see, for example, FIG. 4), it should be recognized that the present invention is not limited to light fibers but rather is applicable to any form of light guide. Moreover, the light guides need not have a circular cross-section, but rather may have any desired shape. For example, in some embodiments the present invention contemplates the use of planar waveguides.

On page 8, please replace the paragraph starting on line 5 and ending on line 9 with the following paragraph:

B3 It should be noted that the illumination device of the present invention is not limited to a light guide that extends linearly. More generally, the light guide may have any shape that is desired for a given application. For example, if the illumination device is to be used in place of neon lighting, the light guide may be constructed to at least partially resemble a letter, numeral, or other symbol (see, for example, FIG. 5).

A version marked up to show changes made to the specification relative to the previous version of the specification is attached.

In the Claims:

Please add claims:

- B4 19 18. The device of claim 1, wherein the light guide is shaped.
- 20 18. The device of claim 18, wherein the shape at least partially resembles a letter, numeral, or symbol.

Remarks

This is in response to the Examiner's action mailed December 16, 2002. In that action the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 4-10, and 13-17, and objected to Claims 2, 3, 11, and 12.

Applicants have amended the application by amending the specification, and adding a new Fig. 5 and two new Claims 18 and 19 as outlined above. Applicant respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position. Present claims are patentable in view of the cited reference.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 6 are rejected under U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EPA 590 511 (hereinafter the "511 application"). The Examiner states that the '511 application "discloses a light guide including a light guide core [36], a plurality of equally spaced light extraction structures [48] and a *diffuse reflection material* [bottom surface is described as mirror]" (emphasis added). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants' invention is directed generally to an illumination system that includes a light guide of light emitting regions and a *diffuse reflective material* disposed around at least a portion of the light guide as recited in Claim 1. In contrast to the present invention, the '511 application does not disclose a diffuse reflective material. As the Examiner observes, the "bottom surface is described as [a] mirror." Mirrors are specular, not diffuse, reflectors. In fact, the '511 application specifically states that "[t]here is no diffuse material added to the backlight panel" (col. 3, lines 1-2). Thus, the '511 application not only does not anticipate the present invention, it specifically teaches away from it. Therefore, Claims 1, 4, 5 and 6 are not properly rejectable under U.S.C. 102(b) over the '511 application.

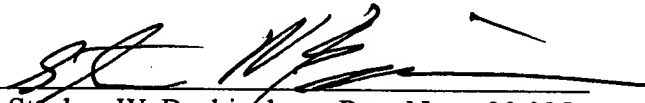
Claims 7-10 and 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '511 application. The Examiner states that although "the light extractions [in the '511 application] are unequally spaced, ... it would have been obvious ... to place the extraction structures where illumination is needed and not to place ... [them] where illumination is not desired thus creating an uneven placement of the structures." The Examiner further states that it would have been obvious to "use any known material to create the [core and the] reflective sheet." However, since these claims ultimately depend from Claim 1 and the cited reference teaches away from the use of a diffuse reflective material, the invention as defined by these claims, can not be obvious in view of this reference.

In view of the above, all claims in the present application are patentable over the reference cited and are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal

of the rejections are respectfully requested and an early indication of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

2-3-03
Date

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Version with markings to show amendments made:

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